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6-1985

Northern Lambda Nord Communique, Vol.6, No.6 (June/July 1985)

Northern Lambda Nord

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Recommended Citation

Northern Lambda Nord, "Northern Lambda Nord Communique, Vol.6, No.6 (June/July 1985)" (1985). *Northern Lambda Nord Communique*. 125.
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Northern Lambda Nord Communiqué

CP/POB990 Caribou Maine 04736 USA

207/498-2088

VOLUME VI: numéro 6

juin/juillet 1985

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June/July 1985

Jonathan D. Currier died in Portland Wednesday, May 29, 1985 at age 28; he was buried June 1 in the Evergreen Cemetery in Caribou. Jonathan succumbed to *pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia. He is survived by his parents, one brother, and two sisters. Jonathan, a native of Caribou, joined Northern Lambda Nord in October, 1980. He was active in the group and was the main energy force behind the construction of Lambda's 1983 Caribou Winter Carnival Snow Sculpture. Jonathan coined the term by which we often refer to ourselves, "the Lambs". His boundless energy, enthusiasm, and creativity will be missed. Letters of condolence may be sent to Natalie and Stuart Currier, POB 365, Caribou, Maine 04736.

Two of Jonathan's drawings appear in this issue of *Communiqué*. They originally appeared in this newsletter, Volume III: number 7, the August/September 1982 issue.

SYMPOSIUM XII - PORTLAND

As in previous years, *Communiqué* is publishing the thoughts and reactions of some of the Lambs who attended our 1985 statewide gathering, the Maine Lesbian & Gaymen's Symposium XII, held May 17-19, 1985 on the campus of the University of Southern Maine/Portland.

* 1 - by Hank from Fredericton, New Brunswick * * * * *

It was very good to get away from it all and have a reason for going to Portland to attend Symposium XII. I am sorry that I missed the performance of "Mrs. James Dean" on Friday night, but with the drive from Fredericton, it couldn't be avoided.

This writer is always "up" after hearing Dale McCormick speak, and my reaction to both her speech and that of Doug Strong is no exception. The decision by planners to ask them both to speak was a very wise one. I attended the following workshops, those being Sex After Forty (I believe that's the title), the one on cooking, the one on being out after a number of years, and the one Sunday on the social implications of AIDS. I found the group on sex in later years to be terrific and wished it could have been longer. I was surprised at the low attendance of the cooking workshop, especially since I rushed through my lunch in order to get into what I thought would be a packed house (there were but 4 of us). The workshop on being out after a number of years could have been much shorter and much more structured, and I somewhat regretted my having gone to it. And I was bowled over to get a chance to meet AIDS victims in the last workshop.

It would have been a letdown had there not been some sort of closing ceremony and although there was nothing planned, I am glad that there was a spontaneous meeting of Symposium members to put a cap on everything.

The Symposium this year was a worthwhile meeting to attend, and I'm looking forward to next year's in Presque Isle. I hear it will be quite good, too.

* 2 - by Randy from Woodstock, New Brunswick * * * * *

Having attended every Maine Symposium since the spring of 1982, I was quite unprepared for several pleasant surprises awaiting approximately 200 participants in this year's Gay Peoples Alliance-sponsored Symposium XII at the University of Southern Maine - Portland Campus.

Surprise #1 - With communication about Symposium XII arriving via *OUR PAPER* just several weeks prior to the deadline, anticipated bottlenecks with registration and problems with information distribution on workshops, housing and special events did not materialize. Registration was held on Friday evening and again Saturday morning as out-of-town, out-of-state (Massachusetts), and out-of-country (New Brunswick) lesbians and gaymen continued a steady stream to Luther Bonney Hall.

Surprise #2 - This Symposium was somewhat similar in content to past years' with one noticeable exception. The participation of political action and human rights coalitions at the Symposium XII reflects the wisdom and maturity of Maine's gay and lesbian community. Playing important roles with their workshops and displays, Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance (MLGPA) and Bangor Area Gay-Lesbian-Straight Coalition (BAGLSC) were two such groups. Gay people want their human rights clearly spelled out in legislation. When that happens, these two determined groups will have played major roles in that long and drawn-out political process.

Surprise #3 - On Friday evening, early registrants filled the Luther Bonney Theatre. The occasion? A 3-act melodrama, "Mrs. James Dean Will Be Right With You." Written by Bill Bemis and directed by Jeff Torish, the play dealt with (among other things) such contemporary issues as alcoholism, over-eating, gay relationships, hustlers, and drag queens. Although the play focused on long-term gay relationships, the thrust of two serious health hazards -- alcoholism and over-eating -- played centre stage. It was a delight to watch this unfold as the play progressed. -- BRAVO.

Surprise #4 - Safe and Sensible Sex (SASS). This workshop was conducted by Larry Kessler, a member of Boston AIDS Action Committee, who gave a short presentation on the history of AIDS, statistics to date, and introduced a young Boston area doctor who is a victim of AIDS, and is in his second year of remission!

Given all the horrible facts about AIDS and its consequences, it was stated as fact that many gaymen tend to ignore learning and practicing sensible sex. I was, needless to say, dumbfounded at this revelation.

The conclusions: (1) outreach to and education of high-risk category groups (2) open dialogue with our sex partner(s) about learning and practicing sensible sex. Remember: S&M is out; S&S (safe sex) is in. Protect your ASS with SASS (Safe and Sensible Sex).

Most Pleasant Surprise - Portland is in full spring bloom! The sights and smells of flowering trees (especially at USM/Portland) was a sheer delight.

Biggest Disappointment - Feminist-comedienne Kate Clinton. (Editor's note: I asked Randy to elaborate on this - he said that Kate told jokes about menstruation, which was fine, but one-third of her performance seemed to be menstruation jokes -- enough was enough.)

Just as expected (and better) - The Boston Gay Men's Chorus. It was cold and cloudy - they sang - it rained outside - they sang again - finally the sun shone through stained glass windows at First Parish Unitarian/Universalist Church in Portland, and they sang on...You see - persistence pays off!

See you at UMPI next year...

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Although I've been to only two Symposia, I thought that the recent one in Portland, sponsored by the Gay People's Alliance, was the better of the two. Perhaps because the schedule and registration information were so long in arriving I was pleasantly surprised to see what was on the programs when they did arrive.

The play on Friday evening, generally well-performed (although one actor seemed to have just discovered he had hands and feet and didn't know what to do with them), was a good treatment of alcohol and food abuse and problems with relationships -- problems that are common in, but not restricted to, the gay community. A straight couple sitting next to me enjoyed and responded to the play as much as the gay people around me. A reworking of some of the lax and awkward scene endings in the second act could improve the play. And the introduction of a major character in the last act, Taxi, (who almost stole the show) seemed like the use of a *deus ex machina*, a technique that doesn't have much credence in playwriting (or any other kind of modern literature) these days.

The keynote addresses the next day set the stage well, not only for the Symposium but also (and probably not coincidentally) for the hearing the following week on the bill to amend the Maine Human Rights Act. Both Doug's and Dale's addresses were good, but Dale always projects an enthusiasm that is infectious - and it was again.

Last year I had a little difficulty finding several workshops of interest to attend. This year it was the problem of having to choose which ones to attend. But I prefer to have too many than too few to pick from. And I was not expecting to be as profoundly affected as I was by the Sunday morning workshop in which two men with AIDS spoke to us. As I listened very carefully to what they said, there kept running through my mind: what an incredible and unjust waste that this disease is making, and will make; so many walking dead men in the gay community. (And, as one of the men pointed out, the only substance that seems to have any effect in halting the disease is no longer being made because it is "economically unattractive" for the company to do so. Now that AIDS seems to have moved into the "general population", we may see, at last, some genuine action and concern, and the development of some "economically attractive" cure or preventative.) And for so many gaymen who refuse to think of aging and death and dying (all three essentially synonymous terms in the opinion of many), perhaps we will be forced to re-evaluate our lives and relationships and realize what is important and of substance in one's life, and try to get past the crap that creeps into and controls so much of our lives. These two men in the workshop seem to have done that. And, as I realized over and over that these two also had thus far beaten the statistics that were outlined on the board, I silently wished them strength and courage.

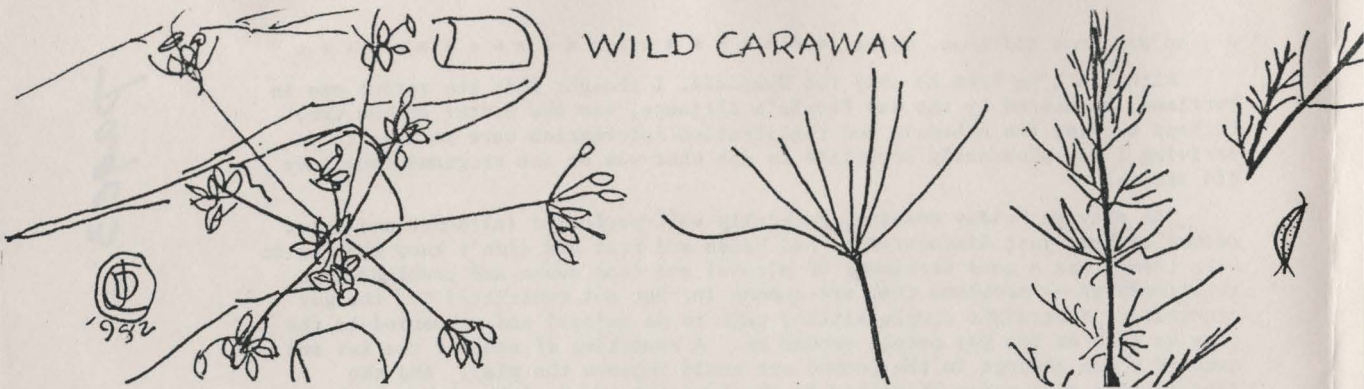
In one workshop, comments by some older men (in their sixties) helped me finally realize what one of the major problems with downstate gay groups seems to be. These older men felt uneasy and even unwelcome by the gay groups, predominantly composed, as they are, of young men. These older gaymen had been unable to locate men of their own age, and it seems that the "cliquishness" among downstate gays had kept them at a distance. (Here's another plus for Northern Lambda Nord: all people of all ages and both sexes are welcomed and associate with one another fairly amiably.) It was obvious that to be an older gayman downstate, especially one "from away", means isolation and, worse, ostracism.

It was good to see so many women at the Symposium and workshops aimed toward their interests. From time to time one gets the feeling that the women are an invisible subset of our group. In addition to the Symposium itself, it was good to get to see so many friends from NLN and to get to the dances on Friday and Saturday evenings.

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WILD CARAWAY



Due to a prior engagement to hear Jed Davis, the lawyer handling the Tolerance Day case, I had to miss the closing ceremonies and the Gay Men's Chorus from Boston. The summing up and closing ceremonies should be as important as the opening ones, and I was sorry to miss them.

My major complaints are: (1) lack of keeping to the schedules as shown on the programs, and (2) evidently some problem with coordinating housing. It's not hard to keep to schedules, especially when programmed so nicely. Since the so-called "gay time" irritates the hell out of me, I probably felt more bent out of shape by this lackadaisical attitude than most. But when it meant that one workshop, one I was definitely learning from, had to be abbreviated, "we" were not amused. I wish that movie "Consenting Adult" had been shown more than once since I would have liked to see it again. However, it was at the same time as a workshop I wanted to attend. The same goes for "Improper Conduct".

Overall I believe the Symposium gave a good standard to aim for in the future, not only to use the good as examples, but to avoid, if possible, the problems, mistakes, and "didn't-works".

EXECUTIVE TO BE CHOSEN JUNE 23

It's time again to choose the Executive Committee members for the next six months. At the May 12 meeting, it was approved to present an amendment to the constitution to the membership to keep the Executive six members, but add a seventh "alternate", so that when a meeting is held, there is a better chance that a quorum of four will be present, noting the distances members travel. That issue will be voted on at this meeting. The nominations for Executive Committee members for June through January are: Cliff, Dick, Laura, Phil, Roger M., Roger T., Ros, Randy, and Sue.

SUMMARY OF MAY 12 MEETING

Old business included: * The radio for the Aroostook Battered Women's Shelter has been purchased, a plaque reading "Donated to the Battered Women's Shelter by the lesbians & gaymen, Northern Lambda Nord" attached to the radio, and the radio has been delivered to the shelter. * Books about gays/lesbians and alcoholism have been purchased and delivered to the Aroostook Mental Health Center's Alcohol Treatment Farm in Fort Fairfield, all books marked "Donated to the AMHC Alcohol Treatment Center by the Lesbians and Gaymen of Northern Lambda Nord". * The legal fund with attorney Martha Grant has had \$500 added to it; the original \$200 has been used by gay people in need of legal aid.

New business included: * Over \$300 was collected at the April 27 fund-raising dance for Jack in Presque Isle; the money has been sent to him * It was approved to allocate \$779.85 from the grant for a series of 12 advertisements (one per month) on the County Page of the Bangor Daily News for "educational messages" about gay people. * \$75 was approved to be allocated

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to join the InternationalGay Association (both of these expenditures are in U.S. funds) * It was approved to sent two delegates to Toronto to the 7th annual International Gay Association conference June 30-July 7. \$80 Canadian was allocated for registration for the two representatives, plus money for transportation/food/incidentals. Housing is free. The two Lambda representatives will be Randy & Laura. * The Gay/Lesbian Phoneline has found a permanent home in Caribou. Volunteers are needed to help answer the phone every Wednesday evening, 7-9pm (Maine time) -- this is just two hours per week!(HELP!) * It was approved that Northern Lambda Nord will host the 1986 Maine Lesbian and Gaymen's Symposium XIII at the University of Maine at Presque Isle over the Memorial Day Weekend. * The calendar was briefly discussed, but no one volunteered to host a party during the summer. The enclosed member's calendar has three picnic/swims (one each month in June, July, and August) and only two parties. (If you'd like to offer your home for a party, or would like to plan and organize one at a special location, contact the Executive...it's not too late!).

SYMPOSIUM XIII - PRESQUE ISLE

It was finally decided (May 12) and officially announced at the opening plenary session at Symposium XII in Portland: Northern Lambda Nord will host Symposium XIII, May 23-26, 1986 (Memorial Day Weekend), on the campus of the University of Maine/Presque Isle (UMPI). Gasps of disbelief accompanied cheers of approval as the 150 attendees at the opening session in Portland heard the news.

At this opening plenary, a Symposium XIII mailing list was circulated and Symposium XIII questionnaires were distributed, asking for comments and suggestions to better help us plan this Lambda-hosted event.

A "brainstorming" session was held in Houlton June 2 to list ideas for organizing Symposium XIII. Input was from those in attendance as well as from the responses on the questionnaires received to date. Several Lambs met with an UMPI representative June 8 and toured the campus to decide on the buildings and spaces we will need next spring.

Further meetings will be scheduled to discuss and plan the specifics. Interested people are strongly urged to attend -- your help and thoughts will be needed to make Symposium XIII a success.

NLN's GAY/LESBIAN PHONELINE

The new telephone number for the Phoneline is 207/498-2088. It operates 24-hours per day with an answering machine, and is staffed one night per week for two hours, Wednesdays from 7-9pm. More volunteers are needed to help staff the phone each week. Only one person is staffing the phone now; we need at least two more volunteers so that each week two people will be at the phone and, by rotating, you could help twice or only three times per month. A brief training session, with aids and booklets from other phonelines, is necessary. It's easy and you can get to talk with people from Aroostook, New Brunswick, and even as far away as New York City. Contact Dick if you will help.

Our Paper

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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"In Bangor on July 7, 1984, a young man named Charlie was chased, beaten, and thrown off a bridge to his death. He was a victim of the fear and hatred of gaymen and lesbians. He was a casualty in the struggle for freedom. We vowed to never forget. We took up the struggle. We will never be silenced. We will work until justice is for all people, until justice is ours."

On Sunday, July 7, 1985, the Bangor Area Gay-Lesbian-Straight Coalition will sponsor the "Charlie Howard Memorial Day - A Day for Human Rights". Everyone is invited to join. The schedule is as follows:

10:30am - Memorial service, Unitarian Church, corner of Main and Union

6pm - Gather at the Unitarian Church to march through downtown Bangor, pausing at the State Street Bridge, the murder site.

7pm - Reverend WILLIAM SLOAN COFFIN will speak at the Pierce Memorial Park, Harlow Street, next to the Bangor Public Library (rain location, the Unitarian Church)

The Reverend Coffin is a nationally-known peace and civil rights activist. He is the former Chaplain of Yale University and presently pastor of the Riverside Church in New York City. He is the author of *Once to Every Man*.

For those people arriving in Bangor on Saturday, July 6, there is an Interweave dance at 9pm at the Unitarian Church. For more information about the Memorial Day or the dance or housing, contact BAGLS, POB 1805, Bangor 04401 or telephone 989-3306.

SO YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A GOOD BOOK?...

The Century Book Club is a national monthly book club for lesbians and gaymen. Each month, their confidential mailings bring interviews with authors, book excerpts, and the latest in lesbian and gay fiction, non-fiction, gift books, and special editions -- titles not available in this area. There is no membership fee, no minimum purchase, no postage and handling, and no automatic shipment. Every book is at a discount price. This issue of *Communiqué* includes a flier about the Century Book Club.

MAINE 'GAY RIGHTS BILL' DEFEATED

On Thursday, June 6, 1985, the Maine Senate voted 17-11 in favor of an amendment to the Maine Human Rights Act to include the term "sexual orientation". This was a compromise version of the original bill. The compromise included public accommodation, credit, and housing in owner-occupied units with four or fewer apartments. Employment was removed from the list of protected categories. Despite the victory in the Senate with this "watered-down" bill, the House defeated the measure.

So, now let's catch our breath and prepare to do this again for the next session of the Legislature, the 1987-88 session.

AIDS

It seems impossible to produce any gay/lesbian-oriented publication today and not include something about Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It has touched us here in Aroostook County. First, some statistics:

As of May 6, 1985, there were 10,050 AIDS cases, as reported by the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta (U.S. cases). As of May 7, the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control in Ottawa had recorded 212 adult AIDS cases in Canada. There are four "official" cases in Maine; zero reported cases in New Brunswick. Forty-seven to 48% of the AIDS victims are dead. The AIDS cases officially reported by the CDC in Atlanta reflect approximately only 10 PERCENT of the actual number of AIDS cases in the U.S.! The tens of thousands of other AIDS cases not reported by the CDC do not conform to its strict definition, and are therefore not officially counted or reported. New York City has reported 3285 cases. To give you the statistics of how the numbers are growing, in New York City, the average number of cases diagnosed per month in 1982 was 49; in 1983, it was 79 per month; in 1984, it was 106 per month.

But statistics are just numbers. These are human beings, most of them gaymen. And some of them we know. It's scary, but to be realistic, this is probably only the tip of the iceberg. Both men and women can contract AIDS.

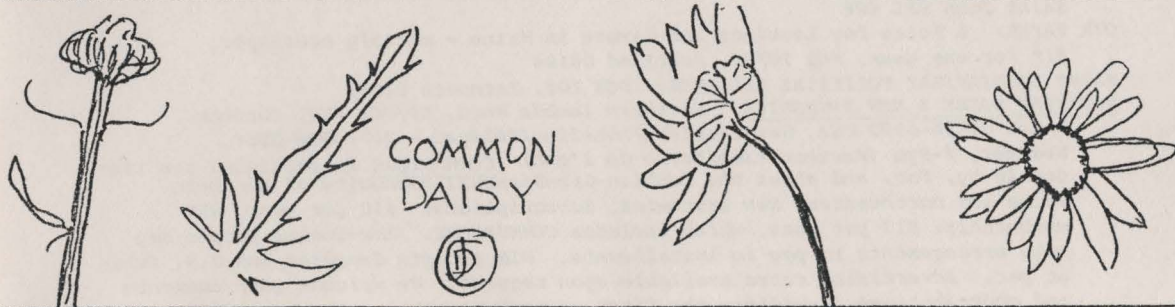
There is no cure for AIDS. There is no vaccine. There is no reliable test to diagnose exposure to AIDS. The best course is preventive. "SAFE SEX". AIDS is spread by exchange of body fluids: blood, urine, semen. Avoid practices which put you at risk: swallowing cum, anal sex without a condom, rimming, fisting. Safe practices include mutual masturbation, "dry" kissing, body massage, hugging, body-to-body rubbing (frottage), light S&M activities (without bruising or bleeding), using one's own sex toys.

Generally speaking, AIDS symptoms may include: * *PROFOUND FATIGUE* which may be accompanied by lightheadedness or headache, that is not transient and is not explained by physical activity or by a psychiatric or substance-abuse disorder; * *PERSISTENT FEVERS* or *NIGHT SWEATS*; * *WEIGHT LOSS* (with or without loss of appetite) of more than 10 pounds during a period of less than two months that is clearly unrelated to depression, diet, or activity; * *LYMPHADENOPATHY* or enlargening, hardening, painful, or otherwise prominent lymph nodes. Swollen lymph nodes or glands are located in the neck, armpits, and groin, and may be associated with a wide variety of non-AIDS conditions. When otherwise unexplained and persistent for more than three months in any three locations, however, lymphadenopathy may be a symptom of AIDS-Related Complex (ARC) and, in some cases, may be a predictor of CDC-defined AIDS: * Recently appearing or slowly-enlarging purplish or discolored nodules, plaques, lumps, rashes, or *NEW GROWTHS* on top of or beneath the skin or on the mucous membranes (inside the mouth, anus, or nasal passages or underneath the eyelids); * A heavy, persistent often *DRY COUGH* that is not from smoking and has lasted too long to be a cold or flu; * *PERSISTENT DIARRHEA*; * *THRUSH*, a thick persistent, whitish coating on the tongue or in the throat which may be accompanied by soreness; * Easy bruisability or unexplained *BLEEDING* from any orifice or from new growths on the skin or on the mucous membranes.

A variety of publications about AIDS are available from *Bibliothèque Lambda*. Some of these include: can we talk?; Guidelines for AIDS Risk Reduction; What Gay and Bisexual Men Should Know About AIDS; AIDS and the Health Care Worker - A guide to the problems and needs of AIDS patients; When a Friend Has AIDS; AIDS and Healthful Gay Sexual Activity; A Guide for People With AIDS. The library also contains a variety of articles and other brochures from the National Gay Task Force's AIDS Health Care Packet. All Lambda members are entitled to use the library.

RIGHTS BILL DISCUSSED ON LOCAL TV PROGRAM

Sunday, June 23, 6pm (Maine) is the date and time for the WAGM-TV, Channel 8 television show, "Spotlight". The topic is the just-defeated 'gay rights bill'. Participating is Jeff Richards, founder of "Maine Against Gays", and Dick from NIN. The Presque Isle station has interviewed gay people twice over the past five years, but this is the first time that a member of our local community has gone before the cameras without back-lighting to hide his face or filmed from over his shoulder. Talk about coming out!



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As of press time, here is a listing of dances in our region:

BANGOR: at the Unitarian Church, 126 Union Street, corner of Main, sponsored by the Bangor Interweave group - every Saturday in June, on a trial basis, otherwise on the first and third Saturday, with a free pot luck meal at 7 pm and the dance from 9pm-1am. This is an alcohol/drug free dance; soda and coffee are available in the meeting room, a quiet place to talk and meet new people. The Wilde-Stein Club of the University of Maine/Orono will sponsor dances at the same location, same time, on the fourth Saturday of each month. These will continue if attendance warrants. (Interweave dances: \$2.50)

FREDERICTON: Call their FLAGline for exact dates of their dances, which are held at the Kinsmen Centre, School Street, Nashwaaksis (North Fredericton). Dances are usually Friday nights, twice per month, from 9pm-1am. Cash bar. \$4 cover, \$2 with NLN membership card. (Fri. June 21 - Gayla Dance with light show!)

SAINT JOHN: Friday, June 21; Friday, July 12; Saturday, July 27; Saturday, August 17; Saturday, August 31. Dances are held at the Union Hall on Tower Street, West Saint John. Call their Gayline for information.

MONCTON: sponsored by Gays & Lesbians of Moncton - held every Saturday at the Kacho in the basement of the Taillon Building, University of Moncton campus, 9pm-2am. "Happy Hour", 8-10pm. GLM members and those with NLN membership cards, \$2; others, \$4. Cash bar.

Gay/Lesbian GUIDE Lesbienne/Gai

FREDERICTON: Fredericton Lesbians and Gays (FLAG), POB 1556, Sta. A.,

E3B 5G2 - FLAGline, 506/457-2156

ORONO: Wilde-Stein Club, Memorial Union, Univ. of Maine 04469 - meets at 7pm Sundays, South Bangor Lounge, Memorial Union

BANGOR: Bangor Area Gay-Lesbian-Straight Coalition (BAGLS), POB 1805, 04401, meets every other Monday, 7:30pm, 126 Union Street

INTERWEAVE: POB 8008, Bangor 04401. Holds pot-luck suppers at the Unitarian Church, 126 Union Street, on the first & third Saturdays, 6pm

QUÉBEC: Centre homophile d'aide et de libération (CHAL), 175, Prince-Edouard, G1K 2M2, 418/523-4997

Groupe gai de l'Université Laval (GGUL) et Groupe des femmes gaies de l'Université Laval (FGUL), CP 2500, Pavillon Lemieux, Cité Universitaire, Ste-Foy G1K 7P4

SAINT JOHN: Lesbian and Gay Organization (LAGO-SJ), POB 6494, Sta. A., E2L 4R9

MONCTON: Gais et lesbiennes de Moncton (GLM), CP 7102, Riverview E1B 1V0

PORTLAND: Gay People's Alliance, Univ. of Southern Maine, 92 Bedford Street, 04102, 207/780-4085

HALIFAX: Gay Alliance for Equality (GAE), Box 3611, So. Postal Sta., B3J 3K6, 902/429-6969

NEWFOUNDLAND: Gay Association in Newfoundland (GAIN), Box 1364, Sta. C., St. John's A1C 5N5

WEBWORK: women's correspondence club, New England & Maritimes, Box 131-N, Calais, Maine 04619

ARCHIVES FOR THE PROTECTION OF GAY HISTORY AND LITERATURE: Box 6368, Sta. A, Saint John E2L 4R8

OUR PAPER: A Voice for Lesbians and Gaymen in Maine - monthly newspaper, \$12 for one year, POB 10744, Portland 04104

MAINE LESBIAN/GAY POLITICAL ALLIANCE: POB 108, Yarmouth 04096

NORTHERN MAINE & NEW BRUNSWICK: Northern Lambda Nord, CP/POB 990, Caribou, Maine 04736-0990 USA. Gay-Lesbian Phonenumber/Télégai - 207/ 498-2088, Wed/mer, 7-9pm (Eastern time/Heure de l'est). COMMUNIQUE is published ten times yearly by, for, and about the Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual community of northern Maine and northwestern New Brunswick. Subscriptions: \$10 per year. NLN membership: \$13 per year, which includes COMMUNIQUE. Low-income people may make arrangements to pay in installments. NLN accepts Canadian and U.S. funds at par. Advertising rates available upon request. We welcome your comments and contributions (deadline: the first of each month).